

TESTIMONY BY JUNE LAPE, WALLINGFORD, CT., IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL #363

March 4, 2014

My name is June Lape. I am a resident of state elderly housing in Wallingford, Connecticut. I am here today to testify in favor of Senate Bill #363.

I am an active resident leader in my community and I am an elected member of the Board of Directors of PHRN, the Connecticut Publicly-assisted Housing Resident Network. I am 87 years old, my husband is 92. We have worked hard all our lives. We are still active as community and church volunteers to this day. We are not the exception. Many residents of state public housing are important contributors to community life in their city or town.

Senate Bill #363 is important to us in Wallingford.

First, we support the transfer of Community Investment Account funds to the Department of Housing that is working very well to improve affordable housing opportunities for low and very low income residents in Connecticut. We support the transfer of funds and salute the work of the new Department of Housing.

Second, with \$150,000 specifically designated for technical assistance for resident participation and the development of independent resident-led organizations in public housing communities, we can look forward to more organizations like ours in Wallingford being developed with assistance from an outside independent resident-focused organization. The assistance is critical at this time because the housing authorities in many cities and towns are beginning to plan for the redevelopment of their public housing communities – and our community is one of them. The issue has been talked about at a housing authority meeting in our town. When residents asked questions about the plans and requested input, we were told that it was a long way off, not to worry about it. However, we have learned from past experience that we must be concerned and involved in our community. We have scheduled a PHRN training session for our residents this week so that we can begin to know our rights during redevelopment and can begin to exercise those rights as a community.

Thank you for your time and attention.